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**Additional Accomplishments of Albert Bleau That Contributed To The
Success of GLMHRA and EMHC To Be Included In The Proposed
Newsletter**

Political Involvement

1. **Elected to the Lynn, Massachusetts School Committee**, an inner city of 87,000 residents and served from 1974-78 receiving 12,000 + votes.
 - The vote ended in a tie. After loosing in a recount, by one vote, I challenged the ballots in state court. I was awarded the election by three votes. We argued for the intent of the voter versus how the ballot is marked, be the governing factor. This became the precedent in Massachusetts and became precedent for other recounts. The Massachusetts' Supreme Judicial Court, other state courts, and the Illinois Federal Circuit Court of Appeals have upheld this argument. **It was the basis for the Democratic Party's challenge in the Florida Presidential election in 2000.**
 - As a committee member, I over saw the implementation of **Kindergarten** in the City and spearheaded the full implementation of **Chapter 766**, the only inner city school department in Mass. to do so.
 - I proposed changes in the bid and emergency repair procedures resulting in savings of over \$200,000. **Uncovered kickbacks and favors to appointed and elected officials.**
 - Was on the negotiating committee and proposed a settlement for what was the **first Teacher's strike in Massachusetts**. The Union and the Committee adopted my proposals.
 - Proposed a policy **requiring uniform qualifications of education and experience** for all administrative positions. The Committee approved the new policy and it is still in place 25 years later.
 - Was the **Chairman of the Building Needs Committee**. Required the appointment of parents, teachers, and principals from every school in the district as well as representatives from the City Council and the Mayor. This was the first time that the Committee had adopted a participatory process. Proposed a five-year plan that resulted in the construction of a new Middle School, improvements to all schools and eventually became the blueprint for the renovation of one high school, the construction of a second high school and additions to three elementary schools.
2. **Working with Tom Costin, a personal friend of the Kennedy family** and the former Executive Director of the National Postmaster's Association and former Mayor of Lynn, I was the **principal coordinator for the Lynn Congressional campaign of Congressman John Tierney** in his initial victory and first re-election victory. In that capacity, I participated in strategy decisions, made the

decision to bring out independent voters following the results of a pre election poll conducted by campaign workers, coordinated phone banks, organized flyer drops, adopted concerning campaign ads and drafted a flyer and three ads for the campaign, supervised and recruited over seventy poll workers, inside and outside the polls, in the major Wards of the City, recruited workers and vehicles to get out the vote and provide babysitters for single moms to vote, etc.

Lynn turned out to be pivotal for his election. John Tierney won by over 2000 votes in Lynn and lost by 1600 votes in the rest of the District. He received over sixty per cent of the vote while two years earlier in a losing effort had received slightly over 50% of the Lynn vote.

Tom Costin and John Tierney invited my wife and me to Washington DC for a private Dinner with one other campaign couple and to the Inauguration of William Clinton. My wife and I attended a private reception sponsored by the Teamsters Union with the Congressman and his current wife.

3. Working with Tom Costin, I was the **principal coordinator for the Lynn Senate campaign of Senator Edward Kennedy** in his victory over Mitt Romney. In that capacity, I participated in strategy decisions, coordinated phone banks, organized flyer drops, supervised and recruited seventy poll workers, inside and outside the polls in the four major Wards of the City, recruited workers and vehicles to get out the vote and provided babysitters for single moms to vote, etc.
4. In 2002, **ran for State Senate in the Massachusetts' Democratic primary** losing to House Speaker Tom McGee's, the son of Thomas McGee.
5. Worked on a variety of presidential, state and local campaigns including: Birch Bayh and Michael Dukakis for President and **Governor Dukakis' initial campaign for Governor and Governor Cellucci's re-election campaign for Governor**
6. I am currently **registered as an Independent**

Lobbying Activities

7. For six years, I was a **successful lobbyist for the Mass. ICF-MR Provider's Association** and developed presentations and testified before the Mass. Rate Setting Commission regarding rates and regulations. I lobbied the state legislature and the Commissioner of Human Services to establish a sitting Task Force to review and approve all regulations promulgated for the Industry.
8. **I took responsibility for the Massachusetts Provider's Council to oppose discriminatory legislation of House Speaker Thomas Finneran** after other providers refused to act, fearing retaliation by the Speaker. He had already filed legislation to cancel funding for a provider who was planning a group home for the mentally ill in his neighborhood.

He filed legislation to set up a registry of disabled individuals in Massachusetts

and to prevent state agencies from funding any disabled resident in a neighborhood or district that exceeded a set percentage of the population that was established by the legislation.

Finneran inserted the language in the annual budget appropriation during a joint conference with the Senate. I lobbied the legislature and Governor Weld's Office, mailed a position paper to legislators and eventually **convinced Governor Weld to line item veto the legislation and convinced the legislature to oppose an over-ride.**

9. Organized parents and **presented before the Mass. Board of Education to oppose Lynn's request to delay the implementation of Kindergarten** in the city. The Board voted to oppose Lynn's request and ordered the immediate implementation of Kindergarten.
10. Worked with state and the local Children's council **to propose implementation of Chapter 766, the Special Education Law**, testified before the state education committee and gained approval of the President of the Committee, Lynn's Senator Walter Boverini. It became the model for other states and the Federal 94-142 Legislation.

Advocacy

1. **DPH ordered the eviction of my developmentally disabled brother from his group home for flunking a self-preservation test.** I called other providers in the state and learned that there were thirty-two individuals being sent back to state institutions. I worked with state providers, hired an attorney and filed a class action suit against the Department of Retardation, Department of Mental Health and the Department of Public Health. DMH and DMR supported my position and refused to oppose it.

The result was that an Injunction was issued by Salem Court and the 32 individuals were kept in their group homes and the state adopted the federal life safety regulations that allowed for staffing and building renovations and finishes to be considered in determining the self-preservation status of disabled individuals in group care facilities.

They were placing my little brother and his suitcase in a cab to be returned to Wrentham State School when they were served with an Injunction from the Salem Sheriff.

I later learned that the state employee's union, in exchange for their electoral support for Governor King against Governor Dukakis, had the King Administration appoint an opponent to deinstitutionalization to head DPH, the ICF licensing authority, and to find ways to prevent any further deinstitutionalization in addition, to undue much of what had already been accomplished.

2. I was refused the opportunity to purchase four condominiums for disabled adults and I was refused financing. **I filed a Fair Housing Complaint against the bank, the Condominium Association, the realtor, and against Fannie Mae.**

As a result, we were allowed to purchase the units, received financing, received a settlement from the Association and they and the owners agreed to view two tapes and receive training in disabilities. I distributed over sixty movie tapes to owners including "My Left Foot" and the "Velveteen Rabbit."

I worked with Fannie Mae to change their regulations and to develop new underwriting guidelines for group care facilities. The new regulations allowed a non-profit agency to be considered an individual versus a corporation in Fannie Mae approved developments and mortgages and allowed for favorable financing and down payment provisions. **They approved \$20 Million dollars for a special bond fund to finance group care and condominiums for disabled individuals and their families. The fund has now grown to \$200 Million Dollars** and is one of Fannie Mae's most successful programs. Thousands of Individuals and non-profit agencies have benefited from this program nationwide. It has also promoted home and condominium ownership by individuals with disabilities.

I was able to open the first group home in the country, an eight-person home for chronically mentally ill individuals in Lowell Massachusetts, under Fannie Mae's new regulations and bond fund.

3. I worked with the City Council, bankers, neighbors, property owners, the Courts and federal and state drug task forces **to close eleven drug houses and apartment complexes in Connecticut and Massachusetts.** Arranged purchases, supervised renovations, financing and grants to renovate the buildings and convert them to affordable housing. **This has resulted in 410 units of safe affordable housing units for individuals with disabilities and for low-income families and individuals.**
4. **Established Community Housing Development Organizations in Lynn, Lowell and in thirty North Shore cities and towns** including Salem, Peabody and Gloucester resulting in priority funding from HUD to develop affordable housing, handicapped renovations to buildings and specialized homeless programs for mentally ill adults and families of disabled children.
5. **Successfully filed Fair Housing complaints and presented before various zoning boards of appeal, the state building code commission, planning boards, Conservation Commissions and local Historical Commissions,** selectman, city councils and neighborhood groups resulting in special use and construction permits allowing renovations, additions and handicapped ramps on buildings occupied by handicapped individuals and individuals with disabilities.
6. **Organized four Chapter 766 parent advisory groups in Lynn and three other towns and trained over sixty parent advocates** to advocate for themselves and other parents with disabled children. I organized three annual conferences. I involved teachers, Special Education. Directors, parents and individuals with disabilities from five cities and towns on the conference planning committee.
7. **Currently provide advocacy for a family with an autistic child** to attain appropriate services from an urban school department. I am **also an advocate**

with the EEOC on behalf of a blind individual who was fired from the Social Security Administration and the State Office of Disabilities. I am training the individuals involved, advocating at meetings, researching relevant statutes and federal and state Court decisions and I am drafting complaints and settlements.

- 8. After a call from a constitute, I advocated with Tom Spirito, the Mass. Welfare Commissioner, to keep three young children: two, four and seven years old, who had recently lost their parents to keep them together and to not permanently place them until a consenting family could be found. I explained the emotional impact to the children if they were separated. Within the week, the children were placed together. This resulted in a change of Welfare policy.**

Eleven years later, I presented a Volunteer of the Year Award to the oldest sister, now eighteen years old, who I had never, known or met.

After the ceremony, the oldest sister approached me and introduced herself. She said, "They told me, that because of you, my brothers and I were able to stay together. You will never know how much this has meant to us. Thank you."